

F1 28. (Thrice Amended) A method as recited in Claim 26, wherein said forming an opening in the hard mask comprises etching through the hard mask upon the pad oxide layer.

49. (Once Amended) A method for forming an oxide region on a substrate assembly, the method comprising:

forming a hard mask over a volume of silicon of a substrate assembly;

forming an opening in the hard mask to expose a region of the volume of silicon;

forming a spacer around the opening in the hard mask, said spacer extending from the volume of silicon to contact the hard mask;

F2 bombarding the exposed region of the volume of silicon with silicon ions through the opening in the hard mask so as to leave unaltered the conductivity type of the exposed region of the volume of silicon, wherein said bombarding implants silicon ions immediately adjacent to but not through the spacer around the opening in the hard mask; and

oxidizing the volume of silicon to form silicon dioxide by exposure through said opening of the exposed region to oxygen, wherein said bombarding and said oxidizing are performed through said opening having a width that is substantially the same at said bombarding as at said oxidizing, and wherein no additional layer is formed within said opening after said bombarding and prior to said oxidizing.